

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present amendments and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4, 6-19 and 21 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 5 and 20 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 2-4, 6-8 and 11-13 are amended by the present Response.

As an initial matter, Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter with regard to pending claims 11-19 and 21.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Applicants' Related Art (herein "APA") at pages 2-5 of the specification of the present application and U.S. Patent No. 4,313,044 to Staats (herein "STAATS"); claims 13-21 were objected to for lack of antecedent basis; claims 11 and 12 were objected to for depending on a rejected base claim; and claims 11-19 and 21 were indicated as reciting allowable subject matter.

In light of this indication of allowable subject matter, claims 11 and 12, both of which depended on claim 5 and independent claim 1, are rewritten in independent form, including all the features of independent claim 1 and claim 5, respectively. In addition, claims 1 and 5 are correspondingly canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and independent claim 13 is amended to recite, *inter alia*, "a second oblong slot ... intersecting with a central portion of the first oblong slot," in light of the comments noted in the outstanding Office Action. Claim 20, which depended on independent claim 13, is canceled without prejudice, also in light of the comments noted in the outstanding Office Action. Further,

claims 2-4 and 6-8 are amended only to depend on rewritten independent claim 11, and it is believed no new matter is added by the amendments to claims 2-4, 6-8 and 11-13.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested the amendments to claims 2-4, 6-8 and 11-13 be entered because they are made only to place the pending claims in form for allowance, in light of the comments made in the outstanding Office Action, and do not raise any new issues which would require further search or consideration.

Therefore, the rejection of pending claims 2-4 and 6-10 in view of APA and STAATS is believed to be moot, and pending claims 2-4, 6-19 and 21 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Further, regarding the antecedent basis for the features of claim 13, it is noted claim 13 is supported by at least FIG. 8, for example.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present amendment is proper and that none of the cited references, either alone or in combination, anticipate or render obvious the present invention as recited in each of the pending claims.

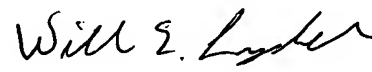
Accordingly, entry of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action, and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are respectfully requested and believed to be appropriate.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based on prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition in allowance and believe they have now done so.

If there are any questions regarding this Amendment or the present application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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